



**Van Asselt Community Center  
PAT Meeting #6  
August 17, 2004  
Meeting Notes**

**PAT Members Present:** Monika Christine Mathews; Joy Moro; Richard Enstadt; Jenny Chung; Don Williams; Mark Manuel. **Guests present:** Ron Wright and Jorge Barrero, project architects; Aaron Power, project artist; Marcia Iwasaki, City of Seattle Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs; Ivan Liu, Beacon Hill News reporter; Robin McGinnis, reporter for the Voice.

**Staff Present:** Erin Devoto, Parks Planning & Development Division Director; Cheryl Fraser, Parks Southeast Sector Manager; Dan Johnson, Parks Project Manager; Clint Hooper, Community Center Coordinator; Karen Lynch, Parks Public Relations Specialist.

**6:30 - 7 p.m.** Those arriving were able to view sketches of other community center projects, along with 4 different views of the preliminary schematic drawings currently being discussed for the Van Asselt Community Center expansion.

**7:00 p.m.** Dan welcomed the community members, as well as the PAT (Project Advisory Team), and gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

**7:03 p.m.** PAT members introduced themselves with a comment about why they volunteered. *Jenny Chung:* Wants to continue the relationship between government and the community, and “reconcile differences and conflicts” especially regarding those living on Frontenac.

*Monika Mathews:* Motivated by her son, who attends Van Asselt School and uses VACC daily.

*Rebecca Sandel:* Wants to help integrate the New Holly facility with the community center, and to encourage kids under 20 to more involved.

*Richard Enstadt:* As a resident of New Holly, he wants to see a sharing of space, and as a member of the NH homeowners association he is glad to lend his opinions.

*Don Williams:* Used to manage High Point, is a former SHA youth worker and wants to be involved in the improvement of Van Asselt CC.

*Mark Manuel:* Has worked five years at Atlantic Street Center, and wants to help.

*Joy Moro:* Her role as a community builder at New Holly is to connect the community with projects like the Van Asselt CC expansion.

**7:10 p.m.** Dan introduced Parks Planning & Development Director Erin Devoto. She thanked the PAT members for their work, which is very much appreciated. One of nine projects voted on in 1999 by Seattle voters, with a mandate to expand or renovate community centers, Van Asselt Community Center is the 8<sup>th</sup> of the nine projects. Erin praised Dan, and Ron and Jorge as the project architects, for their work so far. She encouraged those at the meeting to give us ideas for getting more people in the community involved in the project, and thanked all for coming.

**7:15 p.m.** Dan gave brief background of the design plan for the expansion, linking it back to a trip taken in May by the PAT to High Point Community Center, to view the recently completed expansion and see how “construction language” translates into a finished center. He spoke briefly of other PAT meeting discussions, and clarified the total project budget is \$3.9 million.

**7:20 p.m.** Ron Wright described architectural aspects of the project, and explained the process of determining a budget (in 1999) related to doing this expansion a few years later, with increased building costs. The project is now in the “conceptual design” phase or schematic phase, and is very dynamic. He emphasized that we need to be efficient with the use of space, and with design choices, to accommodate the budget and some added building requirements. He talked about the concept of “three big boxes” which are:

- a large multipurpose room, that can be divided for many functions
- the existing gym on the lower level
- a “living room” central area with office space and connecting hallways

Within the overall space are also two teen/game room spaces, which could be used differently if the center chooses, an after-school child care room (currently large enough for 20-30 children), and in between the multipurpose room & childcare room, a new stainless steel kitchen. He mentioned that the existing gym stays in place, with an addition of an alcove for teams to stand in, an elevator, and bleachers. Jorge Barrero also commented that the central “living room” space area is the building’s center: “Center of the building, center of the community”.

**7:45 p.m.** Dan said construction should begin in Spring 2005, and is expected to be completed in Fall 2005. He noted this is an “aggressive” schedule but he feels it’s realistic, and will get the Community Center back into use as quickly as possible. He spoke briefly about LEED standards for sustainable building; we can decide to register this project and adhere to those standards, or we can unofficially follow many LEED guidelines.

**7:50 p.m.** Monika Christine Mathews asked the audience / PAT for help with an idea to create a group, “Friends of Van Asselt”, to apply for grant funds to improve the Park itself, e.g. to improve the exterior of the Center with a particular focus on the play area.

Monika commented that parents and community members have a responsibility to provide a safe place for kids to go, and to have fun, and is excited about the prospect of improving the area outside the Center itself. She offered a sign-up sheet for those who want to help.

**8:00 p.m.** The project architects took questions. Ron Wright explained that the original six schematic options were narrowed down to three, following several PAT meetings and also on the basis of replies to the survey used about how to design the building space.

Don Williams asked about the basketball courts being relocated, and Jenny Chung mentioned the idea of looking at the existing sports fields to the east of the building (since there is not enough space to put basketball courts north or south of the CC.)

Dan and Ron clarified that it would not be feasible to remove, or move, the existing sports fields. Also Dan reiterated that in other recent PAT meetings, agreement had been reached that fencing and locking the basketball courts would help reduce noisy, late-night behavior.

Cheryl Fraser spoke about the current efforts to lock the park gates at 11 p.m., having hired Northwest Protective Services in May to do so. The Center staff has also been talking with youth to remind them that they have a responsibility to others, and asking them to be considerate. The PAT members agreed that these actions have helped.

Cheryl also reviewed information about a potential grant from the Sonics to improve the existing courts, including fencing them (so they can be locked at night) as well as surface improvements and new hoops.

Mark Manuel asked Dan to describe the new bleacher area planned for the existing gym. Ron and Jorge explained why the restrooms should be on the upper level (due to plumbing efficiencies) and that a locker room at the gym level was a possibility. Clint Hooper said the lockers don't get much use, since most teams who come to play are already in uniform and others who use the gym rarely have a need to change clothes or store things.

One of the interpreters congratulated the whole PAT and Dan, and the architects, and emphasized the importance, in his opinion of adequate bathrooms in convenient locations.

Rebecca Sandel asked to see an updated project schedule; Ron and Jorge will provide it for the next PAT meetings, we'll offer it to local publications, and will post an enlarged one in the CC.

**8:15 p.m.** Three boys from the Community Center who were attending the meeting read a list of things they'd like the expansion project to provide:

A deeper swimming pool; a bigger play area; bigger basketball courts; more pop and vending machines; and a weight room because "we need strong bones and muscles". Dan and Erin thanked them for contributing.

**8:17 p.m.** To wrap up the PAT meeting, Erin reviewed the project schedule. The schematic phase (the current phase) should be finished in late September. The second phase, design and development, will be finished approximately October 30. The third phase, construction documents, will be completed about December 30.

Dan also introduced, and thanked, reporters from the Beacon Hill News and the Voice. (We will provide both with a current project schedule, with reduced detail, to publish.)

Joy Moro added that at the New Holly campus, people often enter by the back door, and encouraged the PAT and architects to plan a visually-appealing and easy to locate, front entry at Van Asselt. Dan mentioned that helping to orient people to the front entry area is one of the challenges for the project artist, Aaron Power.

**8:20 p.m.** Marcia Iwasaki introduced Aaron ("AJ") and described his background as a painter of the human experience, a Peace Corps worker in West Africa, and art teacher for preschool-age and young children. Aaron has a B.S. in biology from Ohio University and lived two years in Gambia. He has also done freelance work for Immunex and other companies.

Aaron described his focus on ornithology (the study of bird life) which is a focus of some of his paintings. He showed slides of his work in three main groups:

1. Area / neighborhood paintings; "onsite" paintings done quickly and not touched up later.
2. Young children and people, and symbols, from his time in Gambia, a Muslim country.
3. Studies of birds and birdlife. (To Aaron, symbols of freedom, growth, nesting and dynamic expression -- which remind him of the community center experience.)

He wants to focus on the entry area of the center, which is currently hard to locate. Aaron is looking for elements that will welcome, and be noticeable, and invites all comments or ideas.

**8:30 p.m.** Everyone was invited to come up and look at the sketches of the completed projects, and the preliminary schematic drawings of the Van Asselt Community Center expansion project, and to ask questions.

**8:55 p.m.** Adjourned

Minutes are posted on the project's web page:

[http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/Centers/current/Van\\_Asselt\\_Community\\_Center.htm](http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/Centers/current/Van_Asselt_Community_Center.htm)

**Next PAT Meeting:**

**Tuesday, September 21, 6 - 8 p.m.**  
Van Asselt Community Center